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**LINE AND RABBLE: DRILL, DOCTRINE, AND MILITARY BOOKS IN
REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA**

by

Mark A. Olsen

Colonel, United States Army

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LINE AND RABBLE: DRILL, DOCTRINE, AND MILITARY BOOKS IN
REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA

By

Mark A. Olsen

Colonel, United States Army

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

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Abstract

War is a struggle of knowledge as well as physical force. To win the American Revolution, patriots had to develop the necessary knowledge by adapting European military books and, eventually, writing their own. Examining these publications illuminates how and why Americans adapted European books for use during the Revolution and why that process was generally successful.

American adaptation succeeded for three main reasons. Adaptation aligned tactics with strategy and the political purpose of the war. Adaptation also accorded with existing military culture that emphasized training and fighting conventionally. Finally, American adaptation negotiated the tension between a Continental Army aspiring to professionalism and militias of less skill but hearty revolutionary fervor.

American adaptation occurred in three main waves, the first from 1766–1775, consisted of drill manuals that taught patriots little more than how to load and fire their muskets. The second wave, from 1776–1779, expanded the lexicon by including works on field engineering, artillery, and the art of war. The final wave, the Continental Army's first full regulations, appeared in 1779 in Philadelphia, representing the temporary intellectual triumph of trained professionalism over enthusiastic militias. These three waves demonstrate a process of successful adaptation.

Dedication

Dr. Ira Gruber inspired the earliest version of this project. With some more hard work, he should see its final version in the not too distant future. His ongoing enthusiasm and gentle prodding have been indispensable in keeping me on track. For that I thank him.

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Dr. Bryon Greenwald, Colonel Doug Golden, and Colonel Jody Owens, the members of my committee, were instrumental in shaping and tightening the work. I thank them for their efforts. The Joint Forces Staff College library staff was also essential. Their help with multiple ILL requests made my paper better. Finally, my classmates in seminar JAWS seminar II helped created an environment that was at once rigorously intellectual and at the same time mutually supportive. They made the JAWS experience better.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

War is a struggle of knowledge as well as one of physical force. It is also a cultural event guided by the norms and expectations of the societies that engage in it. At times that knowledge is well adapted to the separate physical circumstances of the conflict. In other situations, the knowledge that guides how to fight fails in the face of an environment and state of war that refuses to bend to the tools, concepts, and doctrine applied. Ideally, a fundamental divergence between concepts and reality leads to change and adaptation. The reality is frequently different or at least more difficult. Adaptation is never smooth, nor is any military adaptation seamlessly suited to the problems it attempts to solve. Solutions are always roughhewn, contingent, and imperfect. The American Revolution is an excellent example of the challenging process of adaptation. Patriot Americans fought to win independence from the British Crown. To succeed, Americans had to create or acquire almost all the means necessary to fight a war—including the knowledge needed to fight effectively.

A close examination of how Americans, particularly patriots, adapted European military knowledge—in this case books—for use during the Revolution will reveal the challenges of adapting knowledge while in crisis or under fire.¹ Close scrutiny of the patriot American effort will highlight how and why that adaptation effort was generally successful. Adaptation is most effective in execution when it aligns tactics with strategic

¹ Naming the opposing forces during the American Revolution accurately is not as easy as it might seem on the surface. Present day Americans inherently assume that all Americans were patriots. That is not true. Historians of the American Revolution estimate that 19% of the population was loyalist. The war was as much a civil war between Americans as it was a revolution against an outside oppressor. The loyalist population thought itself both American and British and saw no contradiction between the two. Nevertheless, for ease of understanding, I will use American and patriot interchangeably and specify loyalists when necessary.

goals and the intended policy outcome. Additionally, difficult changes that are necessary to win, the essence of military adaptation, are most successful when they fit within an accepted, dominant cultural framework. American adaptations succeeded in combining these two elements—they were effective both tactically and strategically while at the same time the necessary adaptations were generally culturally acceptable within the American understanding of war. The British, in contrast, struggled to make sense of all these elements and to adapt them into a coherent whole necessary to win. Almost as important, American leaders succeeded in balancing the tension between an elite impulse for complex works best suited to a fully professional army and simple manuals designed only to allow the rawest troops to use their weapons. A close examination of the military books printed in North America before and during the American Revolution will reveal the interplay among these three themes—the alignment of basic tactics and techniques to strategy and the ultimate political aim, the general cultural acceptability of the ways that Americans sought to adapt European books for American audiences, and finally how Americans managed what might be best termed the regular versus militia tension that marked the entire patriot war effort.

The need for tactics and techniques to align clearly with strategy and the political goals of a conflict remains as vital today as in the 18th century. Likewise, modern military professionals should consider the ways in which adaptations conform to or conflict with an institution's dominant culture before embarking uncritically. The most seemingly appropriate adaptations may fail simply because by their very nature they subvert an institution's dominant culture.

Following the end of the French and Indian War, both Americans and their eventual British foes assumed that the majority of their military challenges had vanished. Unfortunately, within a few short years, that assumption proved illusory. This dramatic shift is clearly seen in the military books published in North America during this period. After a slow increase over the previous century, military publishing exploded in the 1770s. Some of these books endeavored to meet the demand for a more expansive military lexicon with publications on artillery, field engineering, partisan warfare, and the art of war. However, the majority of books focused on the basic of infantry tactics. Most of these works were clearly intended to train raw Americans to confront their British foes in the fight for independence. The proliferation of simple books highlights a key component and fundamental assumption of the American military effort. War was not so complex that it demanded a lifetime of study to master. With clear instructions, Americans could hope to confront the British Army's long-service professionals. Books diverged between an essentially elite narrative and a plebian one as the tension between a professional standing army and raw militia levees played out. Like the Revolution as a whole, victory demanded both. There was not one authoritative answer, but a melding of both strains to produce success.

The Revolutionary era highlights military adaptation during an age of relatively static military technology. The Continental Army, American militias, and the British Army all relied on smoothbore muskets, smoothbore cannon, and edged weapons. None of the technology was revolutionary. Moreover, neither side had modern military staffs dedicated to improving tactical performance. Adaptation and innovation were fitful, generally unplanned, and yet still essential for success.

While the American Revolution presents a marked contrast to the current technology-driven world of innovation and adaptation, it clearly highlights the effect that culture and cultural assumptions have on military adaptation. Until some point in the 1770s, neither side anticipated fighting the other. In fact, after the defeat of New France in 1763, both American colonists and their British cousins assumed that the Indian tribes were the main remaining military threat to confront in North America. Neither side did much to prepare for war before events began to force their hand. Both sides confronted unanticipated, almost intractable tactical problems. The United States had to create military forces out of whole cloth. In contrast, the British Army faced the challenge of subduing a continent while ideally retaining the allegiance of the assumed loyalist majority. A close examination of military writing published in North America during the period will highlight the divergence between war as conceptualized in doctrine and war as it actually unfolded. The difference is noteworthy.

American military leaders, beginning even before George Washington, decided to fight a conventional, European-style war against the British Empire. Preparing to fight conventionally had been the American preference for nearly a century.² While that

² Since the formation of the first militia units in the seventeenth century, American colonists had trained using European texts to fight in generally European ways. While the so called “Skulking way of war” exemplified by Rogers Rangers and *The Last of the Mohicans* is the mental picture most imagine when thinking of the French and Indian War and the wars that preceded it the reality is distinctly different. Americans never really succeeded in matching Indian and French Canadian proficiency in woodland warfare. Americans struggled to enlist “ranger” units and those that existed generally lagged behind their Indian foes in woodland skill. Instead, American units trained to fight like the British Army, struggled to find Indians operating in dense, wooded terrain and generally eventually won their conflicts by attacking Indian villages and destroying the Indians ability to sustain themselves—colloquially known as the “feed fight.” See Guy Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Stephen Brumwell, *White Devil: A True Story of War, Savagery And Vengeance in Colonial America* (Da Capo Press, 2006); Douglas Edward Leach, *Arms for Empire; a Military History of the British Colonies in North America, 1607-1763* (New York: Macmillan, 1973); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (Vintage, 1999); Patrick M Malone, *The Skulking Way of War : Technology*

preference had previously been ill-adapted tactically, by 1774 and 1775 there were clear political and strategic reasons to attempt to create a conventional army to confront the British Empire. American patriot leaders claimed that their rebellion against parliament and the Crown was necessary to safeguard their English liberties against an overweening and corrupt power. They were not seeking to overthrow the foundations of English liberty and its Enlightenment origins, but to uphold and improve them.³ Effectively, they claimed that America was a better, freer, more enlightened, more civilized European nation simply transported to a new shore. While there is little evidence that Americans made this decision consciously, attempting to fight the Revolution with conventional, European tactics and a standing army reinforced American claims to full English rights. If Americans were truly enlightened and deserving of the rights and liberties of the enlightenment, they had to fight honorably, using correct, scientific methods. And by fighting, and eventually winning, at conventional war, American patriots could demonstrate their military prowess to potential European allies.⁴ They would also demonstrate that they deserved to be a part of the community of nations—simply a better European nation on the other side of the Atlantic. Fighting in this manner would likely pay off when negotiating peace at the conclusion of the war.

For these reasons, attempting to raise and train an army able to fight according to the best European methods aligned American tactics and doctrine with American political

and Tactics among the New England Indians, Johns Hopkins paperbacks ed (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675-1815* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); Mark A. Olsen, “Line in the Wilderness, The Adaptation of European Military Theory to British North America” (Rice University, 2005).

³ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

⁴ Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence : Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789*, A Classics ed (Boston : Northeastern University Press, 1983), 231.

and strategic goals. In contrast, the American Revolution presented the British with a potential political, strategic and tactical mismatch. The American colonies were populated by Englishmen, generally self-governing with functioning legislative bodies prior to the beginning of the conflict.⁵ Britain wanted to maintain political control of the thirteen colonies. At the same time, Britain could not reduce Americans to the status of Irish Catholics or Jacobite Scottish Highlanders, stripped of almost all political rights, and simultaneously claim that they were upholding English liberty for the majority of Americans they believed still loyal to the Crown.⁶ While at moments the British resorted to extreme measures against those they saw as rebels, their political goals generally prevented a wholesale turn to a harder war that instead of simply seeking to defeat American military forces, also sought to subdue the American population by more wanton violence.⁷ The British political concept of the war they were fighting constrained them to fight a conventional, Enlightenment-informed war wherever possible.⁸

European warfare during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was fundamentally shaped by several significant forces. Muzzle loading, smoothbore, gunpowder weapons dominated the battlefield. As state power grew in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, standing armies grew accordingly.⁹ Angled, Vaubanian fortresses dotted key terrain where European powers had the wealth and resources to build them, providing shelter from increasingly potent artillery and magazines for the

⁵ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies*, The Penguin History of the United States (New York : Viking, 2001).

⁶ John Morgan Dederer, *War in America to 1775: Before Yankee Doodle* (New York University Press, 1990), 132; Stephen Brumwell, *George Washington, Gentleman Warrior* (New York: Quercus, 2012), 208.

⁷ Piers Mackesy, *The War for America, 1775-1783* (Bison Books, 1993), 32–33.

⁸ Matthew H. Spring, *With Zeal and with Bayonets Only: The British Army on Campaign in North America, 1775-1783* (Univ of Oklahoma Pr (Txt), 2010), 3–23.

⁹ Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 45-46.

supplies standing, professional armies demanded. Particularly following the horrors of the Thirty Years War, legal movements arose that sought to restrict the effects of combat to combatants only.¹⁰ Additionally, the Enlightenment dominated the Continent intellectually. These factors combined to create a vision of war based on set battles, sieges, and linear tactics between standing armies.¹¹ This vision dominated European military thinking and created both an intellectual and cultural paradigm that extended across the Atlantic. Americans sought to import these norms to North America even when the conditions that made them effective in Europe did not exist in the colonies. In understanding how Americans began to adapt military knowledge for their own use, it is imperative to know what they were attempting to adapt or not adapt from. While the dominant European paradigm was in many ways poorly suited to the tactical demands of North America tactically prior to the American Revolution, it offered a useful model with which to fight the Revolution.

There is an inherent dualistic tension in the American adaptations of the period. No single adaptation answered all patriot demands. The elite American ambition was to fight and win a conventional war of pitched battles. In reality, a grim, hard civil war existed alongside the conventional conflict, and both were necessary for victory. American leaders strove to create a disciplined, drilled army of professionals serving long enlistments. But ill-mannered, ill-disciplined, poorly trained militiamen were also essential to American success. The American adaptation of European military knowledge follows a parallel track. Americans were consumers of European military knowledge.

¹⁰ M. Howard, George J. Andreopoulos, and Mark R. Shulman, *The Laws of War : Constraints on Warfare in the Western World*. (New Haven ; London : Yale University Press, c1994., 1994), 40–58,

¹¹ Parker, *The Military Revolution*.

The American ambition for full European-style professionalism demanded the de facto wholesale adoption of European military knowledge. Yet, in addition to more sophisticated works suited for educated officers and trained, professional formations, Americans needed simple books that gave clear instructions on the basic elements of drill. The adaptation of European military books to the thirteen colonies and the nascent United States demonstrates this dualistic tension and the challenge Americans confronted as they adapted the knowledge they had for the circumstances they faced.

The adaptation of European military thinking for use in the colonies followed no set pattern. Instead, the process was haphazard and generally unguided. It was driven by a mix of market forces, military necessity, popular enthusiasm, and individual initiative. While the British Army had a continuing presence in North America, and during the French and Indian War had taken the challenges of North American combat seriously, that effort had been more temporary than enduring.¹² War in Europe was still understood as “real war” and the proper realm of study for true military professionals.¹³ Moreover, even the most fully professionalized European military forces of the period lacked systematic means to develop doctrine, adapt to changing tactical and technological environments, or capture and exploit lessons learned. Prior to the founding of the Continental Army in 1775, the individual colonies’ militias were the sole military establishments exclusively focused on war in North America.

¹² Great Britain. Army, *A List of His Majesty’s Land Forces in North America, with the Rank of the Officers in the Regiment & the Army* (New York: Gaine, Hugh, 1761); Brumwell, *Redcoats*.

¹³ J. A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army, 1715-1795* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1981).

Colonial legislatures and the militias under their control struggled simply to organize and train.¹⁴ They did not have the means to attempt more. In place of systems and staffs, an assortment of colonial printers, booksellers, militia officers, and other enthusiasts adapted military books for colonial audiences. Their reprinting, shortening, abstracting, commenting, and occasional writing effectively created the first written body of American military knowledge. The process—as uneven and unguided as it was—was intended to provide the knowledge needed for trained, competent military forces. This process was a trans-Atlantic one. Generally, Americans adapted books that first appeared in Great Britain.¹⁵ By clearly and critically examining military books printed in the thirteen colonies and later the United States, it is possible to understand and evaluate how those Americans thought of war and how that mental model translated into action over the course of the American Revolution. Closely examining the network of printers, abstractors, authors, patrons and government officials involved in the production and reproduction of military books, it is possible to follow the spread of the knowledge they created.

Studying early American books presents certain challenges. Among the most daunting is that some of the books known to have existed during the period no longer do. Historians of early America, historians of printing and books, as well as librarians and

¹⁴ John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence*, Revised Edition (University of Michigan Press, 1990), 29–41.

¹⁵ William Windham, *A Plan of Discipline Composed for the Use of the Militia of the County of Norfolk* (London: J. Shuckburgh, 1760); Edward Harvey and Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office, *The Manual Exercise, with Explanations: As Ordered by His Majesty*. (London: Printed for J. Millan, near Whitehall, 1766); Louis-André de La Mamie Clairac (chevalier de), *The Field Engineer of M. Le Chevalier de Clairac: Tr. from the French, with Observations and Remarks on Each Chapter. Together with the Addition of Several New Figures, on a Large Copper-Plate, to Explain the Author's Constructions* (J. Millan, 1773).

bibliographers, foremost among them Charles Evans, the author of an extensive bibliography of all material printed in the colonies and early America, have created a clear record of nearly everything printed during that period.¹⁶ Even books that no longer exist have a story to tell—where and when they were published and by whom, at a minimum. Nevertheless, their absence creates the possibility for meaningful holes in the historical record as possibly vital links in the chain of adaptation are missing. On the whole, however, the story remains discernable with the sources that still exist.

The early 1770s saw an explosion of military publishing in the thirteen colonies. While the first military book was printed in North America in 1690, more military books were published in the colonies between 1771 and 1775 than during the entire French and Indian War.¹⁷ These manuals, derived from the British Army's 1764 manual and a manual published in 1761 for the Norfolk Militia in Great Britain, were tactical books focused on training beginning at the individual soldier level and culminating, at their most complex with the marching, maneuvering, and firings of an infantry battalion.¹⁸ Following the concentration on musket drill, marching, and the basics of soldiering during the first half of the decade, the middle years saw an expansion of military publishing beyond simple tactical manuals. While tactical books still predominated, topics grew to include artillery and field engineering, as well as some books focused on

¹⁶ Charles Evans, *American Bibliography; a Chronological Dictionary of All Books, Pamphlets, and Periodical Publications Printed in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 down to and Including the Year 1820*. (New York, P. Smith, 1941).

¹⁷ Fitzroy James Duke of Monmouth, *An Abridgement of the English Military Discipline Compiled by the Late Duke of Monmouth. Printed by Especial Command for the Use of Their Majesties Forces.*, (Boston: Samuel Green, 1690).

¹⁸ Windham, *A Plan of Discipline*; Harvey and Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office, *The Manual Exercise, with Explanations*.

the art of war.¹⁹ Finally, beginning in 1779 the first Continental Army regulations were published in Philadelphia.²⁰ These three waves were neither exclusive nor self-contained. However, they offer a useful schema for examining and analyzing military publishing during the American Revolution.²¹ Moreover, the types of books published generally

¹⁹ Louis André de La Mamie Clairac, *L'Engenieur de Campagne: Or Field Engineer*. . . . (Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1776); Campbell Dalrymple, *Extracts from a Military Essay, Containing Reflections on the Raising, Arming, Cloathing and Discipline of the British Infantry and Cavalry*. By Campbell Dalrymple, Esq; Lieut-Colonel to the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons. (Philadelphia: Humphreys, Bell, and Aitken, 1776); Richard Lambart, *A New System of Military Discipline Founded upon Principle*. By a General Officer. (Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1776); de Lamont, *The Art of War*, . . . (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1776); de Lamont, *The Art of War*, . . . (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1776); Timothy Pickering 1745-1829., *An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia*. By Timothy Pickering, Jun., (Hall, Samuel, 1740-1807, printer., 1776); Thomas Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, By Thomas Simes, Esq. Author of the *Military Medley*. In Two Volumes. (Philadelphia: J. Humphreys, R. Bell, and R. Aitken, 1776); *Extracts from a Military Essay, Containing Reflections on the Raising, Arming, Cloathing and Discipline of the British Infantry and Cavalry*. By Campbell Dalrymple, Esq; Lieut-Colonel to the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons. (Philadelphia: Humphreys, Bell, and Aitken, 1776); Robert Donkin, *Military Collections and Remarks* (New York: Hugh Gaine, 1777); General officer., *Rules, Maxims, and Observations, for the Government, Conduct, and Discipline of an Army*. By a General Officer., (Norwich: Trumbull, John, 1752?-1802, printer., 1777).; Major general-----de Grandmaison, *A Treatise, on the Military Service, of Light Horse, and Light Infantry, in the Field and in Fortified Places*. By Major General de Grandmaison, Formerly a Captain, with the Rank of Lieutenant Colonel of Cavalry, in the *Voluntiers of Flanders*., trans. Lewis Nicola Major (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1777); James Wolfe, *General Wolfe's Instructions to Young Officers: Also His Orders for a Battlion and an Army. Together with the Orders and Signals Used in Embarking and Debarking an Army by Flat-Bottom'd Boats, Etc.*; (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1778); John Muller, *A Treatise of Artillery*: . . . (Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1779).

²⁰ Adjutant General's Office Pennsylvania, *For the Use of the Militia of Pennsylvania. An Abstract of a System of Military Discipline: Framed by the Hon. the Baron Steuben, Major General and Inspector General of the Armies of These United States*. Approved by the Hon. the Congress (Philadelphia: Francis Bailey, 1779).

²¹ This work is exclusively focused on books for training and employing military force—what might be termed military art and science. However, these were not the only books on military themes published in the American colonies and the early United States. Books on military justice, medicine and manufacturing, particularly how to make gunpowder also appeared during this period. These books signal both the growing wealth of the colonies and the attendant expansion of interests as well as the society wide mobilization the American Revolution necessitated. For legal books see Stephen Payne Adye, *Great Britain, and Army., A Treatise on Courts Martial.: Containing, I. Remarks on Martial Law, and Courts Martial in General. II. The Manner of Proceeding against Offenders.: To Which Is Added, an Essay, on Military Punishments and Rewards.* / Gage, Thomas.; 1721-1787,; *Dedicatee.*, ECCO.; Variation: Eighteenth Century Collections Online. (New-York: Printed by H. Gaine, at the Bible and Crown, in Hanover-Square, 1769); Stephen Payne Adye, *A Treatise on Courts-Martial.: Containing, I. Remarks on Martial-Law, and Courts-Martial, in General. II. The Manner of Proceeding against Offenders.: To Which Is Added, an Essay on Military Punishments and Rewards*. (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by R. Aitken, opposite the Coffee-House, Front-Street., 1779). These are the military medicine books printed John Jones, *Plain Concise Practical Remarks on the Treatment of Wounds and Fractures: To Which Is Added, a Short Appendix on Camp and Military Hospitals; Principally Designed for the Use of Young Military Surgeons, in North-America*. (New-York: Printed by John Holt, in Water-Street, near the Coffee-House., 1775); John Jones, *Plain Concise Practical Remarks, on the Treatment of Wounds and Fractures to Which Is Added, an Appendix, on Camp and*

align with the course of the Revolution and the tactical demands placed on the Continental Army. As the potential for armed conflict developed and that potential became real, Americans needed books to train on the most basic tasks. Drill manuals were well adapted for that challenge. By the middle of the decade, as Washington's determination to make the Continental Army a fully professional force on the European model had time to flower, the American military lexicon expanded. Finally, in the latter

Military Hospitals; Principally Designed, for the Use of Young Military and Naval Surgeons, in North-America / Cadwalader, Thomas., Early American Imprints : Evans 1639-1800 (Series I) / EAI I.; (Philadelphia: Printed, and sold, by Robert Bell, in Third Street, 1776); John Morgan, A Recommendation of Inoculation, According to Baron Dimsdale's Method. / Dimsdale, Thomas.; 1712-1800. ; Present Method of Inoculating for the Small-Pox., Eighteenth Century Collections Online.; (Boston: Printed by J. Gill, in Queen-Street., 1776); William Brown, Pharmacopoeia simpliciorum et efficaciorum, in usum nosocomii militaris: ad exercitum foederatarum Americae civitatum pertinentis ; hodiernae nostrae inopiae rerumque angustii, feroci hostium saevitiae, belloque crudeli ex inopinato patriae nostrae illato debitis, maxime accommodata. (Philadelphia: Ex officina Styner & Cist., 1778); William Brown, Pharmacopoeia simpliciorum & efficaciorum, in usum nosocomii militaris: ad exercitum foederatarum Americae civitatum pertinentis ; hodiernae nostrae inopiae rerumque angustii, feroci hostium saevitiae, belloque crudeli ex inopinato patriae nostrae illato debitis, maxime accommodata. (Philadelphia: Ex officina Caroli Cist., 1781); Joseph Browne, A Journal of the Practice of Medicine, Surgery, and Pharmacy in the Military Hospitals of France Horne.; M. de; Approximately 1740- ; (Jacques De), (New York: New-York, J. M'Lean, 1900); Benjamin Rush, Directions for Preserving the Health of Soldiers: Recommended to the Consideration of the Officers in the Army of the United States of America. ([Lancaster, Pa.?]: [Printed by John Dunlap?], 1777); Benjamin Rush, United States, and Continental Congress., Directions for Preserving the Health of Soldiers: Recommended to the Consideration of the Officers of the Army of the United States., Eighteenth Century Collections Online.; (Lancaster [Pa.]: Printed by John Dunlap, in Queen-Street., 1778); Jean-François Coste, Compendium pharmaceuticum, militaribus gallorum nosocomiis, in orbo novo boreali adscriptum.: [One line from Horace in Latin]. (Newporti [R.I.]: Typis Henrici Barber., 1780); Gerard Swieten, The Diseases Incident to Armies.: With the Method of Cure. / Northcote, William.; -1783? ; Marine Practice of Physic and Surgery.; Selections., Eighteenth Century Collections Online.; (Philadelphia: Printed, and sold, by R. Bell, in Third-Street., 1776); Gerard Swieten, The Diseases Incident to Armies. With the Method of Cure. / Northcote, William.; -1783?, Eighteenth Century Collections Online.; ([Boston] : Philadelphia, printed : Boston re-printed by E. Draper, for J. Douglass M'Dougall, opposite the Old-South Meeting-House, 1777).. Several states published instructions on making gunpowder. See W. Shewell and United States. Continental Congress, Several Methods of Making Salt-Petre ; Recommended to the Inhabitants of the United Colonies, by Their Representatives in Congress. (Philadelphia: Printed by W. and T. Bradford., 1775); W. Shewell, United States. Continental Congress, and Massachusetts., Several Methods of Making Salt-Petre: Recommended to the Inhabitants of the United Colonies, by the Honorable Continental Congress.: And Re-Published by Order of the General Assembly of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay.: Together with the Resolve of Said Assembly, and an Appendix, by Doctor William Whiting. Whiting, William.; 1730-1792., Variation: Early American Imprints.; First Series ;; No. 14585. (Watertown [Mass.]: Printed and sold by Benjamin Edes, near the bridge, 1775); John Holt and New York (State). Provincial Congress, Resolutions of the Provincial Congress, of the Colony of New-York, for the Encouragement of Manufactories of Gun Powder, Musket Barrels, Musket Locks, and Salt. (New-York: Printed by John Holt, in Water-Street, near the coffee-house, 1776); Thomas Tredwell, New York (State), and Committee of Safety., Essays upon the Making of Salt-Petre and Gun-Powder., Eighteenth Century Collections Online.; (New-York: Printed by Samuel Loudon., 1776).

years of the war, as the Continental Army's capacity to train itself grew—with significant foreign assistance—military publishing moved from reproducing and adapting imported European works to printing regulations written expressly for American forces.

Chapter 2: Drill Manuals

American military adaptation as described in the military books published in British North America from the end of the French and Indian War to the early years of the American Revolution followed an uneven arc. The earliest military book of the period was almost certainly printed for British Army forces stationed in North America after the conclusion of the French and Indian War.¹ Military manuals printed later in the 1760s and early 1770s seem likely published at the instigation of mostly loyalist colonial governors intent on raising the overall level of their colony's militia performance following the generally poor showing colonial levees made during the French and Indian War. Only in 1774, as the prospect of actual fighting approached, did American leaders begin to co-opt existing British military knowledge with the intent to use it to resist the Crown. Finally, at the end of 1775, American authors began the first tepid steps to both write and adapt European military thinking for an American audience intent on fighting for independence. Despite this irregular path, the simple books published in Britain's North American colonies which focused almost exclusively on basic infantry skills and tactics, generally met the tactical, strategic and even political needs of the patriot American audiences that put them to use. These books gave Americans the skills they would eventually need to confront the British Army in battle and conformed to the American cultural preference to train and fight according to the best European methods of the period.

¹ Edward Harvey, *The Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practiced at Reviews and Field Days*, . . . (New York: W. Weyman, 1766); Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 212.

The books printed in North America between 1766 and 1775 range from American adaptations of the *Norfolk Militia*, a British militia training manual; adaptations of the British Army's 1764 regulations, the earliest military laws adopted by provincial congresses in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and by the Continental Congress to govern their respective military forces; and finally, military manuals written by American authors. A close examination of these works reveals the meandering trail that the Americans engaged in military adaptation during the period followed. It also illuminates the beginnings of tension between an American military effort focused on enthusiastic, but minimally trained militiamen and one that believed deeper knowledge and more fully professional troops were essential to an eventual American victory.

British Drill Manuals

Adaptation occurs in unexpected ways for unimagined purposes. The drill manuals printed in New England and New York in the late 1760s and early years of the 1770s were intended to improve the skill and discipline of irregularly trained colonial militia units and ensure that British Army units stationed in the colonies conformed to the latest British regulation. Instead, any success that colonial governors had in improving militia effectiveness only made the majority of soldiers trained better able to rebel. Likewise, while adapted for use by British forces stationed in North America, the British Army's 1764 *New Manual Exercise*, first printed in New York in 1766 at the direction of General Thomas Gage, the commander of a British forces in North America, became the most widely reprinted military book in the colonies. The tactics and techniques it contained no doubt frequently turned back on its original practitioners.² Overall, what

² Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 214–15.

these books did allow was for inexperienced officers and NCOs with little active training of their own to train small units on the absolute infantry fundamentals of the period—how to load and fire a smoothbore musket in formation with other soldiers and how to march. This basic level of training allowed the colonies to generate a real military force even if it was barely trained in comparison to British regulars.

A brief understanding of how an eighteenth century infantry regiment was organized is useful in fully visualizing the tactics of the period and the model Americans were seeking to emulate. Generally, a regiment was organized into eight separate companies composed of musket and bayonet equipped infantrymen. Most companies were led by captains. Additionally, by the 1770s, regiments included a grenadier company and a light infantry company. Both of these companies were generally selected from the rest of the regiment and considered more elite. The light infantry company was intended for skirmishing in front of the rest of the regiment. The grenadiers were an assault formation. In Europe, during sieges, an entire army's grenadiers were frequently consolidated into a single formation for an assault. While the company was the fundamental building block of an infantry regiment, it was frequently not a tactical formation. Eighteenth century military leaders faced a constant challenge in how to control and distribute the limited firepower they possessed. While smoothbore muskets were deadly when fired in mass, they were only effective at ranges under 100 yards. They were also slow to reload. Given these limitations, European tactics frequently sought to maintain some fire in reserve while also distributing fire along the entire front of a regiment. To accomplish this, European armies adopted complicated fire plans, "firings" in the eighteenth century vernacular. In these plans regiments were divided into grand

divisions, divisions or sub-divisions which then fired according to the particular plan. Generally four companies constituted a grand division, two a division and a single company or a smaller element a subdivision. The grenadier company served as a reserve. Regular British regiments struggled to master the synchronization needed to execute these complex firings. Given the limited training time and resources available to American militia units, firings on the European model were simply beyond their ability to execute. Yet, this is the standard to which the American militia frequently aspired.

The Norfolk Militia

The late 1760s saw a significant increase in military publishing in colonial North America. That publishing was concentrated in New England and New York. The majority of books printed during the period were drill manuals. Two manuals, both imported from England, were the principal books printed. These works were an American abridgements of the *Norfolk Militia* and the British Army's 1764 New Manual exercise.³ These books were not printed with a future American Revolution in mind. Instead, they were likely efforts by colonial governors to reform and improve their militias. Chastened by poor performance during the French and Indian War, northeastern colonial governors likely wanted to improve their militia units by better training.⁴ This militia reform movement should be seen as another component of the British effort to govern the colonies more closely and effectively following the conclusion of the French and Indian War. And as with succeeding British government attempts to administer and tax the colonies more

³ Windham, *A Plan of Discipline*.

⁴ Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed*.

directly and aggressively, the end result was the opposite of that intended.⁵ The *Norfolk Militia*, a manual written expressly for militia use was well adapted to that purpose. The appearance of seven American versions of the *Norfolk Militia* between 1768 and 1774 attest to the book's general popularity. It was printed in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire. The Massachusetts and New Hampshire editions all contain forewords by each colony's governor directing the books use by the colonial militia. The Massachusetts version went through five editions culminating in a final 1774 version. The 1768 edition was endorsed by then Massachusetts Governor Francis Bernard, who asserted that it was "more concise and easy and thereby better adapted to Militia than any other." For those reasons he directed that "it be used by the Officers of all the Regiments of Foot within this Province, in training the Soldiers under their Several Commands."⁶ Thomas Hutchinson, from a distinguished Massachusetts family and a committed loyalist, replaced Bernard as governor of Massachusetts in 1769 and in the 1771 edition endorsed the same manual praising its concision, ease, and the fact that it had several years of successful use in Massachusetts.⁷

The *Norfolk Militia*'s popularity was not restricted to Massachusetts. In 1771, the New Hampshire edition was endorsed by New Hampshire Governor John Wentworth because it was "easy and useful for the Militia."⁸ Wentworth's endorsement hints at both

⁵ Nick Bunker, *An Empire on the Edge, How Britain Came to Fight America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2015), 18–27.

⁶ William Windham, *A Plan of Exercise for the Militia of Massachusetts-Bay; Extracted from the Plan of Discipline of the Norfolk Militia* (Boston: Richard Draper, 1768), ii.

⁷ William Windham, *A Plan of Exercise for the Militia of Massachusetts-Bay; Extracted from the Plan of Discipline for the Norfolk Militia* (Boston: Richard Draper, 1771), iii.

⁸ New Hampshire. Militia., *For Promoting Military Discipline, This Plan of Exercise, Extracted from the Plan Practiced by the Norfolk Militia, Is Presented to [Blank] of the Regiment of Militia, by the Province of New-Hampshire.*, 42305 (Portsmouth, NH: Fowle, Daniel, 1715-1787, printer., 1771), ii, http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-

the need for better militia training and some of the challenges associated with such training. In his endorsement he expressly forbid officers “giving Liquor to the Soldiers under their Command” as it undermined training and tended to “render Militia Musters pernicious, rather than to promote their useful Institution for a safe and constitutional Defence.”⁹ One of the Massachusetts editions further highlighted the difficulties in training colonial militia units beyond the most basic levels. Thomas Pickering, later a Continental Army officer and the author of a 1775 book intended for American militia use, wrote a postscript directing Americans to disregard the *Norfolk Militia*’s instructions to maintain and use a roster of every soldier’s height to allow the easier sizing of a company. Pickering offered a simpler method that he thought better suited to American circumstances. In his postscript he noted the frequent absences that no doubt plague militia units—a man present for training one day might be “at sea, or else-where absent on the next.”¹⁰

These official endorsements underscore the fact that the American versions of Windham’s *Norfolk Militia* were never intended to prepare patriot American forces to fight the Revolution. The governors who endorsed them and their eventual fates bears this out. Francis Bernard, a British born aristocrat, was a strict supporter of British parliamentary supremacy who feuded with the Massachusetts assembly during his tenure as the colony’s governor. He gave way to Thomas Hutchinson, who although American born, was also a staunch loyalist. During Hutchinson’s second and final term as governor

2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F2F827B3299E738&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9.

⁹ New Hampshire. Militia., ii.

¹⁰ Windham, *A Plan of Exercise for the Militia of Massachusetts-Bay; Extracted from the Plan of Discipline of the Norfolk Militia*, 106.

of the Massachusetts-Bay colony the smoldering enmity that had been briefly contained erupted again with Parliament's Tea Act, the subsequent Boston Tea Party, and then Parliament's retaliation with the Coercive Acts, which brought the colony to the brink of revolt and saw Hutchinson replaced as the colony's governor with General Gage, the commander of all British force in North America. By the time the final Windham edition was printed in Boston in 1774, the city was under martial law and Hutchinson was on his way into exile never to return to Massachusetts.

John Wentworth in New Hampshire provides a similar example. Like Bernard, he was born in Britain and appointed governor of New Hampshire. He served as governor of the colony from 1767 until 1775. Popular during most of his tenure, Wentworth reformed and expanded the New Hampshire militia.¹¹ Eventually as revolutionary fervor intensified in 1775, he was forced to abandon his post.

The Connecticut editions, both published in 1772 New London and New Haven respectively, contain no similar government endorsement. Nevertheless, both editions are titled *Plan of Exercise for the Militia of the Colony of Connecticut*.¹² Moreover, in 1769, the Connecticut assembly adopted the *Norfolk Militia* exercise for use by the colony's militia.

Every edition of the *Norfolk Militia* was adapted by omission alone. North American publishers simply cut the books down, removing what they believed was extraneous and unnecessary for use by Americans. The result was significantly shorter

¹¹ Lawrence Shaw Mayo, *John Wentworth, Governor of New Hampshire, 1767-1775* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=irUnAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en_US&pg=GBS.PR3.

¹² William Windham, *A Plan of Exercise for the Militia of the Colony of Connecticut. Extracted from the Plan of Discipline of the Norfolk Militia* (New London: Timothy Green, 1772).

American editions. The 1760 London version stretched to 382 pages. The longest American version was less than 110. Moreover, the American versions all focused on a strict core of essential tasks—the manual exercise or how to manipulate and then fire a smoothbore musket, exercises for officers and directions on saluting, the Halberd exercise, and finally how to conduct a funeral ceremony. In contrast, the full British version included sections on different methods to control and distribute the fire of a battalion; street fighting; detailed instructions on battalion level reviews, to include the proper ways to receive dignitaries; and how to advance, retreat, and form a variety of different squares; among many other topics.¹³

How the *Norfolk Militia* was adapted for New England militias reveals the difficulty that printers, military leaders, and government officials had in effectively adapting British solutions for American ranks. Americans clearly understood that adaptation was essential. Despite its claimed simplicity, the *Norfolk Militia* as printed in Britain, was poorly suited for immediate American use. And yet how and what to adapt seems much less clear. Beyond the manual exercise and a basic exercise for officers similar to the original book's manual exercise, the choices made were less strictly tactically oriented and a clear indication of the adaptors cultural preferences. Expert use of the halberd, a long pike with an ax head, and traditionally a NCO weapon that was frequently used for keeping soldiers aligned in ranks during the close order drill necessary to mass fire with smoothbore muskets made good sense for a British militia unit, but had less value in the colonies. Including this element of drill is a clear indication of cultural preference. It assumes a stratified, European rank structure with an explicit

¹³ Windham, *A Plan of Discipline*.

distinction between ranks. Halberds were of little use in a woodland fight against Indians, who chose to fight concealed and preferred raids and ambushes whenever possible.

Likewise, on the surface the decision to include the “Funeral Exercise” seems ill-adapted to the specific tactical conditions New England militia units were likely to face. It is difficult to know how many official military funerals occurred in the late 1760s and early 1770s. However, the decision to include this section of the full *Norfolk Militia* demonstrates the importance of cultural concepts of war and the larger role that the militia played in colonial life beyond strict military and tactical concerns. By being able to execute a military funeral as dictated by British standards, American militia units could attest to their adherence to European cultural norms of war effectively attempting to prove their Britishness by marching correctly. At the same time, executing the funeral exercise as a battalion had more than just symbolic utility. The exercise also forced a militia battalion to execute many of the commands, marching steps, and facing movements that it would have to perform if it were ever to fight as a unit. Thus, the inclusion of drills such as the “funeral exercise” served dual functions—to prepare units for some of the tactical challenges they might face if called on to fight as a company or battalion and at the same time to affirm American adherence to a British/European cultural understanding of war and the role of military units in society at large. The choices made clearly show the American determination to train and fight in accepted European style.

The very fact that the *Norfolk Militia*, as with most of the drill manuals of the early 1770s, was derived from British sources and endorsed by British officials underlines the cultural importance Americans attached to both European models of war

and adhering to those models in their conduct. Official endorsement meant that the *Norfolk Militia* was part of the canon that good soldiers practicing war correctly followed. American adaptation, use, and intended mastery of that same canon further proved that Americans, despite their distance from the seats of British culture and power, were every bit members of the same cultural community. Their loyalty to its military standards attempted to prove that they were not backwards, uncouth distant relations, but true Englishmen fully entitled to the rights that that categorization implied.

These books show a process of American military adaptation. Colonial leaders, particularly in New England, recognized the need to marshal more effective military forces. The best way to accomplish that task was to conduct more effective training, using manuals specifically suited to American needs. British methods of training, adapted for American formations, either New England or New York militia units or the incipient formations of the Continental Army, were the best means to achieve the desired results. Within the movement, the focus remained almost exclusively on the basics of combat for musket equipped infantrymen.

The 1764 New Manual Exercise

In its own way, the history of the 1764 British Army drill regulations demonstrate how the American Revolution was a civil war as much as it was a revolution against overseas, imperial tyranny. The 1764 *Manual Exercise* was the most widely printed military book during the revolutionary period.¹⁴ The first North American edition appeared in 1766 in New York.¹⁵ The book was widely printed in the colonies. Editions

¹⁴ Harvey and Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office, *The Manual Exercise, with Explanations*.

¹⁵ Harvey, *The Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practiced at Reviews and Field Days*, . . .

were published from Massachusetts to Virginia. The 1766 edition is no longer extant, however, a newspaper advertisement still exists noting it for sale. A letter from General Thomas Gage in 1766 to Edward Harvey, the British Army's Adjutant General, and the man frequently listed as the regulation's author, describes how the book was printed for the use of British forces in North America.¹⁶ The regulation was again printed in New York in 1769 and 1773.¹⁷ Like the 1766 version, no edition of either the 1769 or 1773 *New Manual Exercise* survive. Both 1769 and 1773 versions of the *New Manual Exercise* were printed by Hugh Gaine, a prominent New York printer. The history of the 1764 *New Manual Exercise* demonstrates how works intended for the British Army migrated into use by patriot Americans. In 1774, after previously only appearing in New York, editions appeared across New England. While in the previous seven years only three versions of the *New Manual Exercise* were printed in North America, in 1774 five editions came out. Two were printed in Boston, one in Newburyport, Massachusetts, then the site of the Massachusetts provincial congress and one each in New Haven, Connecticut and Providence, Rhode Island.¹⁸ This explosion of interest in the 1764 regulations was almost

¹⁶ Houlding, *Fit for Service*.

¹⁷ Edward Harvey, *The New Manual and Platoon Exercise, as Obtained by His Majesty in 1764: With an Exercise* (New York: Hugh Gaine, 1769); Edward Harvey, *The New Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764* (New York: Gaine, Hugh, 1773).

¹⁸ Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office., *The Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty in the Year M,DCCC,LXIV, and Now Generally Adopted in Connecticut, Rhode-Island and Massachusetts-Bay. Together with Explanations of the Method Generally Practised at Reviews, Field-Days, &c.*, 13322 (New Haven: Green, Thomas, 1735-1812, printer., 1774), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F301614361FBA68&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office., *The Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practis'd at Reviews and Field-Days.*, 13319 (Fleet, Thomas, 1732-1797, printer., 1774), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F3018B7E7466D98&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office., *The Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty in the Year M,DCCC,LXIV, and Now Generally Adopted in Connecticut, Rhode-Island and Massachusetts-Bay. Together with Explanations of the Method Generally Practised at Reviews, Field-Days, &c.*; Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office. and Edward

inevitable. Massachusetts was subject to British martial law under the Coercive Acts and the rest of the region meant to be overawed into obedience by the presence of the British Army in Boston. Rising patriot fervor and a desire to be prepared to confront the British militarily if the ongoing crisis could not be resolved peacefully fueled demand for books for military training.¹⁹

While the earliest editions do not survive, a comparison between the earliest extant New York version, printed in 1775, British versions printed in London and Dublin during the 1760s and the 1774 New England versions illuminates how the book was adapted for use in North America. If one assumes that Gaine did not make substantial changes to his 1775 version from the ones that he printed in 1769 and 1773, and that he likely based the versions he printed on the 1766 New York version printed by William Weyman it seems most likely that the 1764 *Exercise* as originally adapted in New York was the version that spread across the colonies. In 1772, what is clearly an abridged version of the 1764 *Harvey* was published by Guy Johnson in New York.²⁰ This version,

Harvey, *The Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764: Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practised at Reviews and Field-Days, &c.*, 13323 (Providence: Carter, John, 1745-1814, printer., 1774), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F30160E79A77DB0&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office. and Edward Harvey, *The Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty in 1764. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practised at Reviews and Field-Days.*, 13320 (Boston: Thomas, Isaiah, 1749-1831, printer., 1774), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F3018B5DE600428&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9.

¹⁹ John Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 375–424; Kevin P Phillips, *1775: A Good Year for Revolution* (New York: Viking, 2012), 160–63.

²⁰ Guy Johnson ca. 1740-1788., *Manual Exercise, Evolutions, Manoeuvres, &c. To Be Observed and Followed by the Militia of the Province of New-York: With Some Rules and Regulations for Their Improvement; &c. and an Explanatory Plate. By Colonel Guy Johnson, Adjutant General for the Northern District of That Province. By Order of His Excellency William Tryon, Esq; Governor and Commander in Chief.*, 42351 (Albany: Robertson, Alexander, 1742-1784, printer., 1772), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-

was printed in Albany, New York. Close, textual analysis suggests that all North American version of the 1764 regulations stem from a single source.

The 1764 manual begins with the most basic instructions—how a soldier should stand while under arms. The book continues with a description of the manual exercise necessary for shouldering, grounding, loading and firing a musket. The manual then continues with an explanation for how a formation of three ranks should align itself to fire at once. The next section describes how to form a regiment of ten companies for “reviews . . . Field Days, in performing the Firings, Evolutions, &c. &c.” The manual continues with a description of how to exercise with the full regiment assembled. The book includes more detailed instructions for marching, firing by Grand Division, Division and Sub-Divisions. The marching instructions include instructions on wheeling, advancing, passing defiles, and bridges as well as retreating. Other instructions describe how to form various squares depending on the tactical situation although no thoughts are offered on what formation to use when. At the end of almost every North American version the following note appears:

There are several other manoeuvres, sometimes practis'd by the British regiments in Europe. The nature of the service in America is such, that they are almost, if not entirely useless to the troops serving in this country, they are not therefore here inserted.²¹

2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F2F822D71CA23B8&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9.

²¹ Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office., *The Manual Exercise as Ordered by His Majesty, in One-Thousand Seven-Hundred and Sixty-Four. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practised at Reviews and Field Days, &c.*, 13321 (Newbury-Port: Lunt, Ezra, 1743-1803, printer., 1774), 30, http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-

2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F3015F1EA523E68&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office. and Edward Harvey, *The Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty, in 1764. Together with Plans and Explanations, of the Method Generally Practis'd at Reviews and Field-Days, &c.*, 14109 (Wilmington: Adams, James, 1724?-1792, printer., 1775), 34, http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-

2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F3016

These instructions, likely included at the behest of the British Army when the manual was printed in New York in the late 1760s represent the sole, affirmative adaptation that the book underwent. Several editions included engraved plates that illustrate the more complex exercises, alignments, marching and wheeling techniques the manual describes.

It is worth considering how useful such a manual, particularly its more complex instructions was for Americans who lacked in-depth military training, or experience. The most complete American edition was 35 pages long, including illustrations. The figures are difficult to decipher. It is not always clear what actions the written commands and engraved pictures are meant to convey. Over the course of the 18th century, the British Army itself found it difficult to maintain any real level of training proficiency.²² Implicitly, the manual assumes a cadre of experienced officers and NCOs to execute the training described. With such a cadre, simplicity and concision were undoubtedly strengths in the 1764 regulations. Experienced leaders could use the book as a reference. Inexperienced Officers would read it and rely on those with more experience to demonstrate and lead training as they learned the intricacies of drill and maneuver.

Unfortunately, the Americans lacked similarly trained and experienced officers or NCOs. Without the training, education or cadres needed to make use of the most sophisticated parts of the 1764 manual, Americans almost certainly relied on the basic manual exercise and firing instructions. In fact, the version printed in Williamsburg,

0EB8E32410&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office. and Edward Harvey, *The Manual Exercise, as Ordered by His Majesty, in the Year 1764. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practised at Reviews and Field-Days.*, 49356 (Philadelphia: Aitken, Robert, 1735-1802, printer., 1775), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=1036CC7559B5F090&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9.

²² Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 388–95.

Virginia in 1775 was twelve pages long and only included these instructions.²³ And yet the vast majority of the North American versions of the book include the more sophisticated instructions in the latter half of the book. Given the expense of printing at the time, the inclusion of these sections is more than an accident.²⁴ Instead, it is best to see more complex instructions on regimental level firing techniques, advancing and retreating by regiment, and negotiating complex terrain as ideal types of war fought correctly. While Americans did not immediately have the ability to execute all the maneuvers described in the 1764 regulations, the descriptions of these types of maneuvers represent a cultural ideal to which Americans generally subscribed. Americans units might never learn to fire by Grand Divisions, Divisions or Sub-Divisions, but they did aspire to confront and defeat a force so trained on the field of battle.

One edition of the 1764 regulations highlights the way that it was likely used. The only existing copy of this version printed in 1775 in Philadelphia ends on page eight, after the manual exercise—the portion of the manual dedicated to how to load and fire a musket. It is easy to imagine a junior officer or NCO deciding that the rest of the book was superfluous to his needs. All that was needed were the instructions to teach raw soldiers to load and fire their weapons. Moreover, many editions of the book suggest just

²³ Great Britain. Adjutant-General's Office. and Edward Harvey, *A New Manual, and Platoon Exercise: With an Explanation. Published by Order of His Majesty: Edward Harvey, Adjutant General. August, 1764.*, 14108 (Williamsburg: Dixon, John, d. 1791, printer., 1775), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F301609E352B598&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9.

²⁴ Lawrence C. Wroth, *The Colonial Printer*. (Charlottesville, Va. : Dominion Books, 1964, 1938, 1964), <https://nduezproxy.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cat04199a&AN=ndu.70316&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

such a use. In addition to the detailed step by step instructions included, the majority of versions included a simple two page list of all the words of command to execute the manual exercise. It is easy to imagine the training officer or NCO, who had not memorized all the commands himself using that list of commands to drill his charges.

In late 1774, when both American patriots and the British government had come to expect that war was inevitable, the Massachusetts Provincial congress endorsed the 1764 regulations stating: “to the inhabitants of Massachusett’s-Bay, that in Order to their perfecting themselves in the Military Art they proceed in the Method of the above EXERCISE, it being in their Opinion the best Calculated for Appearance and Defence.”²⁵ The 1764 regulations served as the defacto tactical instructions of the early American Revolution. Thirteen versions were published in 1774 and 1775. Editions appeared in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware and Virginia. This was the most expansive burst of military publishing in eighteenth century America. It is a clear example of what one prominent historian of the period has called a “Rage Militaire” that accompanied the outbreak of the Revolution, as patriots across the colonies embraced all things military to demonstrate their virtue and implicitly win the Revolution with a collective rush of furious energy.²⁶ More concretely, what should be viewed as the revolutionary versions of the 1764 British regulations

²⁵ Great Britain. Adjutant-General’s Office., *The Manual Exercise, Commonly Called the 64th Exercise. Together with Plans and Explanations of the Method Generally Practis’d at Reviews and Field Days. (Recommended by the Provincial Congress, in October 1774, to the Inhabitants of Massachusett’s-Bay, That in Order to Their Perfecting Themselves in the Military Art They Proceed in the Method of the above Exercise, It Being in Their Opinion the Best Calculated for Appearance and Defence.)*, 50070 (Boston: Fleet, Thomas, 1732-1797, printer., 1776), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=1099AFDAC01312D0&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9.

²⁶ Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People At War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

allowed Americans to train themselves in the basic skills needed to fight in the eighteenth century, and effectively described how they attempted to fight. In 1773, at roughly the moment just before the British Army's 1764 Regulations exploded in popularity, William Brattle, then the Captain General of the Massachusetts Militia had a version of his 1733 *Military Discipline* reprinted. Brattle, a Harvard graduate and relatively prominent member of Massachusetts society, eventually rose to the highest position in the prerevolutionary Massachusetts military establishment. His book perhaps answered a perceived need when it was reprinted in 1773, however, it had little broader impact except perhaps to underscore both the relative lack of resident military knowledge and expertise and to demonstrate the general continuity in military practice over the course of the eighteenth century. Despite its general lack of influence or utility, the fact that it was printed and sold suggests a market and a growing demand for military books.

Windham's *Norfolk Militia* and the 1764 British Army regulations attributed to Harvey, the two major military books printed, in the colonies in the early 1770s, clearly demonstrate American theoretical adherence to European, specifically British, modes of training and fighting. Both manuals were abstracted versions of works previously published in Britain. Moreover, these works were generally speaking official publications. The American role in adaptation was minimal at best. The best evidence clearly suggests that the American versions of the 1764 British Army regulations were modified for North American use by the British Army itself. The case is slightly less clear for American versions of William Windham's *Norfolk Militia*. However, given the book's official endorsement in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut, and the consistency between the versions published in the three colonies, it seems clear that like

the 1764 regulations that followed, the North American Windham was officially sanctioned. Only as the political situation grew more tense after the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, and the Coercive Acts in 1774 can it be realistically assumed that military books printed in the colonies were printed and read with an intent to confront British rule militarily. Together these Windham and Harvey publications, and the other lesser works of the period, as adapted in the colonies clearly show a nascent American view of war. War fought correctly followed an essentially European model. Mastering the rudiments of loading and firing a musket in some unison with your fellow soldiers, combined with knowing a few more commands for marching, facing and wheeling was sufficient to fight. Implicitly, wars were battles between organized forces. There was minimal to no intent to fight skulking or “Indian Style.”

Militia Acts

By 1775, an early American model of adaptation began to crystalize. This model emphasized the learning the basics of infantry combat with a twist highlighting a particularly American view of war with revolutionary fervor as the lynchpin of success. The colonial militia acts passed by several New England legislatures at the beginning of the American Revolution highlight the American conviction that patriot forces were fighting to defend and sustain their God-given rights as Englishmen. Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island all passed military laws for their respective forces in 1775. These laws also indicated a belief in the power of righteous action to prevail even in the face of greater skill and more professional training. This strain of thinking effectively assumed that Americans fighting for their rights as free born Englishmen could defeat trained British long service soldiers who despite their greater skill had been

reduced to a state of near slavery by the draconian discipline imposed on them in a tyrannical British army.

The Massachusetts Provincial Congress sitting in Concord passed *Rules and Regulations for the Massachusetts Army* on 5 April 1775 before the battles of Lexington and Concord tipped the by then inevitable conflict into actual war. Connecticut passed its “Act for regulating and ordering the Troops that are, or may be raised for the Defence of this Colony” in May 1775. Rhode Island followed suite passing a law virtually identical to the Massachusetts act on 15 June 1775.²⁷

The preface to the Massachusetts *Rules and Regulations* in the law’s preface stressed the reasons that Massachusetts had to marshal military force in face of the threats they perceived. The provincial congress, claiming the authority of God and their English ancestors, stated that “considered the Duty we owe to GOD,[. . .], to the King, to Great-Britain, our Country, ourselves and Posterity, do think it an indispensable Duty, by all lawful Ways and Means in our Power, to recover, maintain, defend and preserve, the free Exercise of all those civil and religious Rights and Liberties for which many of our Fore-

²⁷ Massachusetts. Provincial Congress., *Rules and Regulations for the Massachusetts Army. Published by Order.*, 14244 (Salem: Hall, Samuel, 1740-1807, printer., 1775), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F301453EAD81FD8&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Massachusetts. Provincial Congress., *Rules and Regulations for the Massachusetts Army. Published by Order.*, 14245 (Watertown: Edes, Benjamin, 1732-1803, printer., 1775), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F2F82E674302F08&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Rhode Island. General Assembly, *Rules and Regulations for the Rhode-Island Army.* (Newport [R.I.]: Printed by S. Southwick, 1775); Connecticut., *At a General Assembly of the Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut, in New-England in America, Holden at Hartford, in Said Colony, on the Second Thursday of May, in the 15th Year of the Reign of His Majesty George the Third, King of Great-Britain, &c. A.D. 1775. An Act for Regulating and Ordering the Troops That Are, or May Be Raised, for the Defence of This Colony.*, 13874 (Green, Timothy, 1737-1796, printer., 1775), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F2F83047309D778&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9.

Fathers fought.”²⁸ These threats demanded “our raising and keeping an Army of Observation and Defence, in order to prevent, or repel, any farther Attempts to enforce the late cruel and oppressive Acts of the British Parliament.”²⁹ Anticipating the British view that colonials “shall have no chance[l] (sic) being undisciplined, Cowards, disobedient, impatient of Command and possessed of that Spirit of leveling which admits of no ‘Order, Subordination, Rule or Government,’” the Massachusetts provincial congress passed its military law in an attempt to guarantee that its military forces would be adequate to the task.³⁰ And while Massachusetts risked accusation of “Rebellion” to not “surrender our just Rights, Liberties and Immunities,” the law, which mandated that all Massachusetts soldiers attend church, said nothing about training.³¹

After the outbreak of open war in April 1775, Connecticut passed a similar law evoking similar reasons for the need to resist British tyranny. As the Connecticut law stated:

Suffering in the common Cause of British America, trusting in the Justice of their Cause, and the righteous Providence of Almighty God, for the Restoration of Quiet and Peace, or for Success in their Efforts for their Defence, have thought it their Duty to raise Troops for the Defence of this Colony. . . . it is necessary that such Troops both Officers and Soldiers, should be made acquainted with their Duty, and that Articles, Rules and Regulations should be established to preserve Order, good Government, and Discipline in the Army, agreeable to the mild Spirit of our Constitution, and not according to the Severities practiced in Standing Armies.”³²

²⁸ Massachusetts. Provincial Congress., *Rules and Regulations for the Massachusetts Army. Published by Order.*, 1775, 3.

²⁹ Massachusetts. Provincial Congress., 4.

³⁰ Massachusetts. Provincial Congress., 4.

³¹ Connecticut., *At a General Assembly of the Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut, in New-England in America, Holden at Hartford, in Said Colony, on the Second Thursday of May, in the 15th Year of the Reign of His Majesty George the Third, King of Great-Britain, &c. A.D. 1775. An Act for Regulating and Ordering the Troops That Are, or May Be Raised, for the Defence of This Colony.*, 3.

³² Connecticut., 5.

Implicit in all these early provincial congress military laws was the assumption that patriot conviction and revolutionary zeal could and would surmount any deficiencies in training. An address drafted in the Continental Congress in 1776 made the point more explicitly, stating that “Our troops are animated with the Love of Freedom . . . We confess that they have not the Advantages arising from Experience and Discipline: But Facts have shewn, that native Courage warmed with Patriotism, is sufficient to counterbalance these Advantages.”³³

Collectively, these works printed from 1768 to 1775 exemplify a period during which American adaptors—be they pre-revolutionary colonial officials, independent printers publishing for a market hungry for works on military training, or revolutionary legislatures seeking to marshal and make their incipient military power effective—focused their efforts on books for training individual infantrymen and small infantry units. By 1775, these books were the doctrinal expression of a belief that militia levees, really only skilled enough to fire their weapons, could defeat the British Army and win the colonies their rights. Moreover, the events of the Revolution seemed to confirm these beliefs. The Massachusetts militia, more enthusiastic than highly trained, inflicted significant casualties on the British force retreating from Lexington and Concord on 19 April 1775.³⁴ That same force succeeded in encircling General Gage and his forces in Boston. The pyrrhic British victory at Bunker Hill in June 1775 followed by the British evacuation of Boston and retreat to Halifax suggested that revolutionary ardor was more than a match for rote training, long service enlistments, and an education in the art of

³³ Royster, *A Revolutionary People At War*, 28.

³⁴ Stephen Conway, *The War of American Independence 1775-1783* (London, New York: Edward Arnold, 1995), 20.

war. Enough militia men who could assemble when called and had enough training to fire their muskets when ordered would win the war. Unfortunately, from the patriot perspective, the happy events of 1775 turned in 1776. British naval mastery and the British Army tactical proficiency proved decisive during the 1776 Long Island campaign, drove the Continental Army into New Jersey, and nearly ended the revolution before Washington's dramatic counterattack at Trenton and Princeton at the end of the year.³⁵ The events of 1776 made clear that enthusiastic militiamen while necessary, were not sufficient nor decisive.

American Authors

In contrast to the provincial and continental regulations of 1775, which emphasized both the zealous political reasons American patriots used to justify their resistance and provided a legal framework for the operation of the nascent patriot forces, two other books appeared in 1775 that stressed a different and contrasting perspective on how Americans would fight and win their incipient revolution. Timothy Pickering and Thomas Hanson, both Americans wrote military manuals in 1775 that sought to adapt European military thinking for the needs of American patriots.³⁶ These books both recognized that Americans had to first learn the rudimentary skills needed to load and fire, as Pickering stated in the opening of his *An Easy Plan of Discipline*, "All the uses for which a manual exercise was invented and all the valuable ends to which it can be

³⁵ Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence : Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789*; Royster, *A Revolutionary People At War*.

³⁶ Timothy Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia. By Timothy Pickering, Junior. . . .* (Salem: Samuel an Ebenezer Hall, 1775); Thomas Hanson, *The Prussian Evolutions in Actual Engagements; Both in Platoons, Sub, and Grand-Divisions; Explaining All the Different Evolutions; and Manoeuvres, in Firing, Standing, Advancing, and Retreating, Which Were Exhibited before His Present Majesty May 8, 1769; and before John Duke of Argyle, on the Links of Leith, near Edenburgh [Sic] in 1771* (Philadelphia: J. Douglass M'Dougall, 1775).

applied. Except the priming, loading and firing, which are necessary in an engagement, all the rest of the exercise is good for nothing,” At the same time these books implicitly argued that adhering to only basic skills would inevitably prove insufficient to defeat the full military force Britain could apply.³⁷ Similar to previous manuals, Pickering and Hanson included instructions on basic skills, but added more sophisticated topics aimed not just at training private soldiers, but also preparing junior and senior officers for their duties. Moreover, this was a sentiment shared among some of the most prominent American revolutionary leaders. John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock and George Washington among other noteworthies all subscribed to Hanson’s *The Prussian Evolutions in Actual Engagements*.³⁸ Washington himself purchased eight copies.³⁹

The military books published in colonial America from the end of the French and Indian war until 1775 describe a winding process of adaptation. The British Army likely initiated the process by adjusting its 1764 regulations for use in the colonies. Then colonial governors loyal to the crown used modified versions to make their militias more effective. When American patriots believed it necessary to prepare for civil war against their British cousins, they seized the available books, books from British sources, to guide their improvised training. Despite the crooked path taken, these ad hoc adaptations led to American forces sufficiently trained to meet their British foes in battle. And while unguided, the American adaptations met the Americans’ fundamental needs. Besides a

³⁷ Pickering, *An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia*. By Timothy Pickering, Jun.

³⁸ Hanson, *The Prussian Evolutions in Actual Engagements; Both in Platoons, Sub, and Grand-Divisions; Explaining All the Different Evolutions; and Manoeuvres, in Firing, Standing, Advancing, and Retreating, Which Were Exhibited before His Present Majesty May 8, 1769; and before John Duke of Argyle, on the Links of Leith, near Edenburgh [Sic] in 1771*, iii. Subscribers paid for a book in advance and frequently had their name listed in the book’s front matter.

³⁹ Adrienne Harrison, *A Powerful Mind: The Self Education of George Washington* (Potomac Books Inc., 2015), 104–5.

basic level of tactical proficiency, the unacknowledged, but at the same time, deliberate decision to generally fight the Revolution in a conventional fashion aligned American tactics with patriot strategy and their ultimate political goal. Claiming their innate rights as Englishmen effectively meant that Americans had to fight like civilized Englishmen—using correct eighteenth century, enlightenment inspired tactics. This also comported with the implicit American strategy to fight a conventional war all the while seeking European allies to assist in their struggle against Britain. Most importantly, preparing to fight so conventionally had the promise to smooth America's eventual entrance into the community of nations by proving that Americans adhered to the same standards of civilization as European states. On the surface it seems unlikely that an unguided American tactical adaptation could fulfill these myriad requirements. Yet, the unconscious American decision to adapt and adhere to conventional European methods of fighting made all of these larger challenges easier to accomplish. Appropriate adaptation was, if not necessary for eventual success, at the very least, important.

Americans were also able to adapt these European books for their use because European methods of fighting aligned with American cultural preferences. Americans saw themselves as Israelites in the Wilderness, the bearers of civilization to a hostile and savage land.⁴⁰ Hewing closely to European standards was central to Americans' view of themselves. This cultural preference made it easier for Americans to look to Europe for military knowledge and adapt it to the circumstances that they faced.

⁴⁰ Cotton Mather, *Edulocorator, A Brief Essay on the Waters of Marah Sweetened. With a Remarkable Relation of the Deplorable Occasion Afforded for It, in the Premature Death of Captain Josiah Winslow, Who with Several of His Company, Sacrificed His Life in the Service of His Country, Engaging an Army of Indians, May 1 1724* (Boston: B. Green, 1725).

At the same time that Americans both adapted and generally enthusiastically embraced European military books and military knowledge, a set of particularly American assumptions colored their perspectives. The majority of Americans, principally at the beginning of the Revolution, believed that zeal would overcome skill. Instead of long service and consistent, demanding training, revolutionary fervor would win out. This perspective, a perspective noted in other revolutions, was in constant tension with a less popular, but more accurate view that while raw enthusiasm was imperative it was also in the end insufficient. Trained and drilled soldiers on long enlistments led by professional officers were essential to winning independence. These two views were in constant tension throughout the American Revolution. During this early period the first predominated. However, that ascendancy did not endure.

Chapter 3: Expanding the Lexicon

Beyond the Declaration of Independence, 1776 was not a successful year for the American cause. Following the successes of 1775 during which the newly born Continental Army had seemingly succeeded in expelling the British Army from the colonies when General Gage and his forces withdrew from Boston to Halifax, American patriots implicitly believed that their enthusiasm was more than a match for British might and stilted professionalism. American defeats on Long Island, in Westchester, New York and across New Jersey proved otherwise. The Revolution's chances of success reached perhaps their lowest point at the end of 1776. British forces had captured almost all of New Jersey and the Continental Army had been reduced to a few thousand ill-trained and underfed troops. The remaining troops, many with their enlistments about to end, had little reason to remain with the colors as what to many seemed inevitable defeat loomed. Washington's counterattack at Trenton in December 1776 rapidly turned the moment of the conflict.

For Americans, 1776 also showed that their earlier model of adaptation was insufficient to achieve the lasting victory for the patriot cause. Rudimentary skill combined with head long enthusiasm would not yield lasting victory. Moreover, the frothy zeal had gone flat in the cold New Jersey winter, if not well before then. Americans, led by Washington still intended to confront and defeat the British in decisive battle, but they had begun to realize that a wider base of skill and knowledge was imperative to achieve that victory. American military officers, and printers in New England and Pennsylvania, particularly began to write and print books on a wider range of military topics. The range of military books published in the United States vastly

increased beginning in 1776 and in the years immediately after.¹ In place of the simple books published in 1774 and 1775 aimed at giving Americans the skills they needed to face off against their British and loyalist foes, by 1776, Americans began to understand that they needed more complex and comprehensive works to fight and win a longer war.

The books printed in 1776 alone present a marked contrast to those that appeared just a year earlier.² Instead of basic drill manuals as exemplified by American versions of the 1764 British Army regulations, American printers produced works on the art of war, field engineering, equitation, military leadership, the proper organization of an army as well as more basic skill focused works. Furthermore, whereas in 1775 and before, the books printed in the colonies were derived from British sources, in 1776 books by French

¹ Clairac, *L'Engenieur de Campagne: Or Field Engineer*. . . ., 1776; Dalrymple, *Extracts from a Military Essay, Containing Reflections on the Raising, Arming, Cloathing and Discipline of the British Infantry and Cavalry*. By Campbell Dalrymple, Esq; Lieut-Colonel to the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons.; Lambart, *A New System of Military Discipline Founded upon Principle*. By a General Officer.; Lamont, *The Art of War*, . . ., 1776; Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, By Thomas Simes, Esq. Author of the *Military Medley*. In Two Volumes.; Francois de la Baume Le Blanc de La Valliere, *The Art of War* (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1776); Lewis Nichola, *A Treatise of Military Exercise, Calculated for the Use of the Americans. In Which Every Thing That Is Supposed Can Be of Use to Them, Is Retained, and Such Manoeuvres, as Are Only for Shew and Parade, Omitted. To Which Is Added Some Directions on the Other Points of Discipline*. (Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1776); Donkin, *Military Collections and Remarks*; Grandmaison, *A Treatise, on the Military Service, of Light Horse, and Light Infantry, in the Field and in Fortified Places*. By Major General de Grandmaison, Formerly a Captain, with the Rank of Lieutenant Colonel of Cavalry, in the *Voluntiers of Flanders*.; General officer., *Rules, Maxims, and Observations, for the Government, Conduct, and Discipline of an Army*. By a General Officer.; Wolfe, *General Wolfe's Instructions to Young Officers: Also His Orders for a Battlion and an Army. Together with the Orders and Signals Used in Embarking and Debarking an Army by Flat-Bottom'd Boats, Etc.*; Muller, *A Treatise of Artillery*: . . .

² Nichola, *A Treatise of Military Exercise, Calculated for the Use of the Americans. In Which Every Thing That Is Supposed Can Be of Use to Them, Is Retained, and Such Manoeuvres, as Are Only for Shew and Parade, Omitted. To Which Is Added Some Directions on the Other Points of Discipline*.; La Valliere, *The Art of War*; Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, By Thomas Simes, Esq. Author of the *Military Medley*. In Two Volumes.; Lamont, *The Art of War*, . . ., 1776; *Extracts from a Military Essay, Containing Reflections on the Raising, Arming, Cloathing and Discipline of the British Infantry and Cavalry*. By Campbell Dalrymple, Esq; Lieut-Colonel to the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons.; Lambart, *A New System of Military Discipline Founded upon Principle*. By a General Officer.; Philip Astley, *The Modern Riding-Master: Or, A Key to the Knowledge of the Horse, and Horsemanship: With Several Necessary Rules for Young Horsemen*. / George; III.; King of Great Britain.; 1738-1820, ; Dedicatee. (Philadelphia: Printed and sold by Robert Aitken, printer and Bookseller in Front-Street., 1776); Louis André La Mamie Clairac, *L'Engenieur de Campagne: Or Field Engineer*. . . . (Philadelphia: R. Aitken, 1776).

authors appeared. In contrast to the wide geography of military publishing that characterized the works that appeared in 1774 and 1775, by 1776 the overwhelming number of books printed were printed in Philadelphia.³ Thirteen military books were printed in 1776, of those nine were printed in Philadelphia. At that point, Philadelphia was the seat of Continental Congress. Following the American defeat at Long Island, expulsion from New York City, and retreat into New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Philadelphia was closest significant city to the Continental Army.

As in the very first years of the Revolution, these books remain generally focused on training and fighting conventional engagements as practiced by professional European armies. Many contained significant sections devoted to the fundamental skills an inexperienced soldier would need to master to fight on an eighteenth century battlefield. Along with these rudimentary tasks, several also included descriptions of the roles of officers and NCOs. However, in contrast to the works printed in 1774 and 1775, the majority of books that appeared in 1776 and later were longer, by their nature meant for serious study as opposed to use as an on the spot training reference. In contrast to the simple drill manuals of the previous years, the books printed in 1776 were intended for more serious professionals, those seeking to study war and not just learn enough to load and fire a musket. At the same time majority of the books printed were geared for

³ Clairac, *L'Engenieur de Campagne: Or Field Engineer*. . . ., 1776; Astley, *The Modern Riding-Master*; Nichola, *A Treatise of Military Exercise, Calculated for the Use of the Americans. In Which Every Thing That Is Supposed Can Be of Use to Them, Is Retained, and Such Manoeuvres, as Are Only for Shew and Parade, Omitted. To Which Is Added Some Directions on the Other Points of Discipline.*; La Valliere, *The Art of War*; Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, By Thomas Simes, Esq. Author of the *Military Medley. In Two Volumes.*; Lambart, *A New System of Military Discipline Founded upon Principle. By a General Officer.*; Dalrymple, *Extracts from a Military Essay, Containing Reflections on the Raising, Arming, Cloathing and Discipline of the British Infantry and Cavalry. By Campbell Dalrymple, Esq; Lieut-Colonel to the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons.*; *Extracts from a Military Essay, Containing Reflections on the Raising, Arming, Cloathing and Discipline of the British Infantry and Cavalry. By Campbell Dalrymple, Esq; Lieut-Colonel to the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons.*

battlefield engagements between forces organized on eighteenth century enlightenment lines.

Major Lewis Nicola and the books that he wrote and translated during this period are the most noteworthy example of this movement towards more professional knowledge and a belief that instead of simply relying on the militia and enthusiasm the United States required skilled professionals.⁴ Nicola, an Irish immigrant to British North America, had been commissioned in the British Army in 1740. While in the British Army, Nicola served briefly in Flanders. By 1766, Nicola had immigrated to Pennsylvania, settling in Philadelphia. Besides several other business ventures, Nicola, opened a circulating library that by 1771 contained more than 1000 volumes. He also maintained an interest in military affairs.

In 1776, Nicola published his own work *A Treatise of Military Exercise, calculated for the use of Americans*. He also translated French works—in 1776, *L'Engenieur de Campagne: or field engineer* by Louis André de La Mamie de Clairac. In 1777, he translated Major General Thomas Auguste Le Roy de Grandmaison's *A Treatise, on the Military Service, of light horse, and light infantry, in the field and in fortified places*. A third French work appeared in Philadelphia in 1776. The book by Francois de La Baume le Blanc de La Vallière, a seventeenth century French officer was titled *The Art of War*. It was printed by Robert Bell the same man who printed the 1777 Grandmaison. While there is no definitive evidence, given Nicola's background he is the most likely translator of the la Vallière work in addition to the other two French books.⁵

⁴ Nicola is best known for his role in the Newburgh Affair at the end of the American Revolution when he may have suggested that George Washington become King of the United States.

⁵ Grandmaison, *A Treatise, on the Military Service, of Light Horse, and Light Infantry, in the Field and in Fortified Places*. By Major General de Grandmaison, Formerly a Captain, with the Rank of Lieutenant

Collectively, these books represent a significant part of the movement away from simple manuals focused primarily on training militiamen. Clairac was one of the most prominent military engineers of the period. His book was one of most popular among eighteenth century British Army officers who studied war seriously.⁶ Clairac's work focused on field fortifications, redoubts, bridges, attacking "a country house," entrenching, fortifying camps, siege lines and other technical and tactical military engineering.⁷ The book was published with accompanying diagrams and detailed instructions. It was intended for a trained professional or at least an enthusiastic and dedicated amateur. The Grandmaison is a similar book, also popular with British officers of the day and likewise focused on more than just basic skills.⁸ Grandmaison provided a detailed discussion of the utility of light troops, how to select and equip said troops, and employ them tactically. He described how to use light troops in ambushes, reconnaissance, surprise attacks, and defending fixed posts. The La Vallière book, originally written in the seventeenth century, was less immediately useful for battlefield tactics even given the slow pace of technological change. However, as with the other French books printed in Philadelphia, it was for a more serious student of war interested in how to maneuver, encamp prepare for battle, and attack and defend fortified positions.⁹

Colonel of Cavalry, in the Volunteers of Flanders.; Lewis Nicola 1717-1807., *A Treatise of Military Exercise, Calculated for the Use of Americans. In Which Every Thing That Is Supposed Can Be of Use to Them, Is Retained, and Such Manoeuvres, as Are Only for Shew and Parade, Omitted. To Which Is Added Some Directions on the Other Points of Discipline.*, 14947 (Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1776), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F30143CB8215AB0&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; Clairac, *L'Engineur de Campagne: Or Field Engineer*. . . ., 1776; La Valliere, *The Art of War*.

⁶ Ira D. Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the Age of the American Revolution* (Copublished with The Society of the Cincinnati by the University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 160.

⁷ Clairac, *L'Engineur de Campagne: Or Field Engineer*. . . ., 1776.

⁸ Gruber, *Books and the British Army*, 179.

⁹ La Valliere, *The Art of War*.

All three French books were intended for serious students of tactics and the technical aspects of seventeenth and eighteenth century European warfare. They represent a shift from the books published just a year or two before. Implicitly, they are an argument that raw enthusiasm was likely to prove insufficient if Americans were to win independence from the British Crown. At the same time, they present a thoroughly European view of war in line with American cultural and tactical preferences.

Nicola's own work presents a contrast to the French works he translated. By the point that he wrote it, he was familiar with both the training and skill of American units, having played a role in patriot military affairs in Pennsylvania beginning in 1775.¹⁰ He wrote a manual intended for units raised in Pennsylvania and combined basic skills such as the 1764 British Army regulations manual exercise with his thoughts on maintaining discipline and maneuvering formations in the field. Seemingly, Nicola had also given some serious thought to how Americans should fight differently from their British enemies. He advocating a company of riflemen in place of the British Army's standard grenadier company. In his view grenadiers were not suited to American circumstances and deliberate assault ill-advised in the face of British regulars.¹¹ In many ways, Nicola's own work mirrored Timothy Pickering and Thomas Hanson's books, which attempted to adapt preexisting British books for American units. All three books went beyond mere emulation of the British and represent a significant step forward in learning and synthesis.

¹⁰ Robert F. Haggard, "The Nicola Affair: Lewis Nicola, George Washington, and American Military Discontent during the Revolutionary War," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 146, no. 2 (2002): 146.

¹¹ Nicola, *A Treatise of Military Exercise, Calculated for the Use of Americans. In Which Every Thing That Is Supposed Can Be of Use to Them, Is Retained, and Such Manoeuvres, as Are Only for Shew and Parade, Omitted. To Which Is Added Some Directions on the Other Points of Discipline.*, 2.

Three other books were printed in Philadelphia that were similar to Nicola's *A Treatise of Military Exercise* and intended for patriot forces were *A New System of Military Discipline Founded upon principle* by Richard Lambart, the 6th Earl of Cavan;, *Extracts from a military essay* by Campbell Dalrymple; and *The military guide for young officers*, by Thomas Simes. All three authors were British Army officers. Lambart, was a member of the Irish peerage and eventually a Lieutenant General in the British Army. Dalrymple was a Lieutenant Colonel of the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons whose unabridged *A Military Essay* was printed in 1761. The 1776 abridged American version focused on maneuvering large formation was published in Philadelphia. Dalrymple's work, even in its abridged American version was intended for professional officers. Thomas Simes, a British officer of less distinction, who eventually became an author and instructor for an early British military academy wrote *The Military Guide for Young Officers*. While explicitly focused on new entrants to the profession, at over three hundred pages, it was not intended for the only casually interested.¹² Lambart concluded his work with a section titled "Rules, Maxims, and Observations for the Government, Conduct, and Discipline of an Army."¹³ These maxims were reprinted separately in Norwich, Connecticut in 1777.¹⁴ Although seemingly intended for a professional audience, they are generic aphorisms without much utility. One maxim "bad conduct will ever produce destructive consequences" is an example of the overall level of Earl

¹² Dalrymple, *Extracts from a Military Essay, Containing Reflections on the Raising, Arming, Cloathing and Discipline of the British Infantry and Cavalry*. By Campbell Dalrymple, Esq; Lieut-Colonel to the King's Own Regiment of Dragoons.; Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, By Thomas Simes, Esq. Author of the *Military Medley*. In Two Volumes.; Lambart, *A New System of Military Discipline Founded upon Principle*. By a General Officer.

¹³ Lambart, *A New System of Military Discipline Founded upon Principle*. By a General Officer.

¹⁴ General officer., *Rules, Maxims, and Observations, for the Government, Conduct, and Discipline of an Army*. By a General Officer.

Cavan's profundity.¹⁵ Nevertheless, while not a popular book among the most thoughtful British officers of the period, Lambart's *A New System* was intended for a professional, generally learned audience.

In contrast to Lambart's generic and less than useful *New System*, James Wolfe's *Instructions to Young Officers* appeared in Philadelphia in 1777. Originally published in London after the conqueror of Quebec's death in 1759, the book is a collection of Wolfe's orders and instructions. Besides being a chronicle of the orders he gave while in command from regimental to Army level, it is also a book on leadership. A quote from Wolfe at the beginning of the book makes the work's intent clear:

When a young Gentleman betakes himself to the profession of Arms, he should seriously reflect upon the nature and duties of the way of life he has entered into, and consider, that it is not as the generality of people vainly imagine, learning a little of the exercise, saluting gracefully, firing his platoon in his turn, mounting a few guards (carelessly enough) and finally, exposing his person bravely in the day of battle; which will deservedly, and in the opinion of judges acquire him the character of a good officer: no he must learn cheerfully to obey his superiors, and that their orders and his own must be punctually executed."¹⁶

Following this stern injunction and warning to avoid acting as a dilettante, Wolfe further enumerated his expectations for junior officers. Like the other works published in Philadelphia in 1776 and after, Wolfe's *Instructions* assumed a European military structure, that war would be fought on European lines, and that focused study was necessary to master military arts and sciences. It was well adapted to a Continental Army intent on becoming as much a regular force as possible.

¹⁵ General officer., 3.

¹⁶ Wolfe, *General Wolfe's Instructions to Young Officers: Also His Orders for a Battalion and an Army. Together with the Orders and Signals Used in Embarking and Debarking an Army by Flat-Bottom'd Boats, Etc.*, 13.

John Muller's *A Treatise on Artillery* was the most technical book printed in Philadelphia during this period. Appearing in 1779, *A Treatise on Artillery* was a true specialist's work. Muller was a German mathematician and expert on military engineering and artillery. He immigrated to Britain in 1741 and was appointed headmaster of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. In 1757, he published *A Treatise on Artillery* in London. The 1779, an American version was printed in Philadelphia and dedicated to George Washington, Henry Knox and "the officers of the Continental Artillery."¹⁷ The complete reprinting of Muller's *Treatise on Artillery* clearly shows the American movement towards greater professionalization over the course of the Revolution. It was not a work for an interested amateur. Muller covered the construction of cannon, gunnery, ammunition, and the tactical employment of artillery.

The war changed fundamentally during this period, broadening to a European and even a worldwide conflict. The battle of Saratoga in 1777 was the critical turning point. In battles in September and October 1777, American forces commanded by Horatio Gates isolated and forced John Burgoyne's army to surrender. Burgoyne, on an expedition proceeding south along the Hudson River from Canada, sought to split the colonies apart and isolate New England from the rest of the United States. While initially successful, a combination of rugged wilderness, forbidding geography, and militia harassment severely weakened his army. Gates's mix of Continental regulars and New York and New England militia stopped Burgoyne's progress towards Albany, New York near Saratoga. The combination of American riflemen, Continental Regulars, and militia

¹⁷ Muller, *A Treatise of Artillery*: . . .; John Muller, *Treatise of Artillery: Containing ... to Which Is Prefixed, an Introduction with a Theory of Powder Applied to Fire-Arms* (John Millan, Whitehall, 1768); Henry Manners Chichester, "John Muller," *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1900 1885, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Muller,_John_\(DNB00\)](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Muller,_John_(DNB00)).

at Saratoga changed the course of the Revolution. By forcing a British army to surrender Gates's force established the military viability of the Continental effort. That victory made the prospect of a full military alliance with a European power realistic. Saratoga was a not demonstration of superior American drill or discipline. Instead, the Americans won because of their artillery, improvised fortifications, and numbers and more than anything, Burgoyne's isolation from reinforcements.¹⁸

Saratoga proved that the United States had a chance of prevailing. The alliance with France that resulted from the victory greatly increased American chances for victory. While it generally confirmed that adapting European methods for American use could succeed, the particular, near unique circumstances at Saratoga qualified that conclusion. The wave of American military adaptation that followed Saratoga reinforced previous efforts to adapt European military methods for American use. An alliance with France brought the prospect of European arms and expertise, effectively further encouraging Americans to both adapt and adhere to European military thinking to maximize the value of the alliance.

¹⁸ John E. Ferling, *Whirlwind : The American Revolution and the War That Won It* (New York, NY : Bloomsbury Press, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2015., 2015), 190–95.

Chapter 4: Continental Regulations

Baron Freidrich von Steuben and a team of European and American officers wrote the first comprehensive Continental Army regulations in Philadelphia during winter of 1778-1779.¹ Officially titled *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, the work was commonly known as the Blue Book. Like the works that preceded it, Steuben's *Regulations* attempted to adapt and synthesize European military thinking for an American audience. In this case Steuben sought to combine Prussian and French military thinking, tactics, and techniques into a simplified manual well suited to the Continental Army.²

The book, like the works that preceded it inherently assumed that the United States would eventually win its independence from Britain via decisive, conventional, European style battle. It was intended to train Americans for such combat. The mere fact that a Prussian officer was tasked with writing the United States' first comprehensive military regulations clearly demonstrates the American intend to hue as closely as possible to standard European ways of wars. Finally, as the only significant military book printed in North America during the later stages of the American Revolution, *Regulations*, represented a temporary triumph for those who believed in the necessity of a trained, long enlistment Army as opposed to relying on state militia—at least at the intellectual level.

Steuben was a complicated figure. A captain in Frederick the Great's Prussian Army who intimated that he had been a general and, a minor noble who suggested he was

¹ Paul Lockhart, *The Drillmaster of Valley Forge, The Baron de Steuben and the Making of the American Army* (New York: Smithsonian Books, 2008), 186–87.

² Lockhart, 187.

Baron, Steuben was both a hardened professional soldier and a bit of a fraud. Despite the fact that his position and military experience in Europe was not all that he suggested it was, Steuben proved essential to eventual American military success in the Revolution. Steuben entered American service in 1778. He eventually became a Major General and the Inspector General of the Continental Army.³

While written by Steuben and his team, the *Regulations* were reviewed by a board of Continental Army general officers and approved by George Washington. The Regulations were ratified by the Continental Congress in March 1779 for “the order and discipline of the Troops, especially for the purpose of introducing an uniformity in their formation, an manoeuvres, and in the service of the camp.”⁴ The *Regulations* represented an ideal to which both the Continental Army and as many state militias aspired.

The *Regulations* themselves were a blend of French and Prussian sources, simplified and adapted for Americans. Wherever possible Steuben sought to take complex, multi-step drill movements and simplify them for American soldiers with less experience and inferior training. Steuben’s manual provided detailed instructions for the training of individual soldiers up to battalions and regiments. In contrast to earlier works, Steuben placed less emphasis on the manual exercise, preferring marching drill as a better means to instill the discipline that he sought. However, in contrast to the Prussian reputation for brutal discipline, Steuben’s *Regulations* counseled “patience” in training new recruits.⁵

³ Lockhart, *The Drillmaster of Valley Forge*.

⁴ United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.*, 44068 (Boston: Fleet, Thomas, 1732-1797, printer., 1781), 2, 9.

⁵ United States. Continental Army., 6.

The manual is divided into three sections. The first focused on drill, the manual exercise, and basic tactics up to battalion and regimental level. Steuben's manual, while concise provided concrete details for officers and NCOs to follow as they trained their formations from the individual soldier to larger units. He directed that soldiers "use a piece of wood instead of flint" and wooden cartridges when practicing mock firing.⁶ Steuben applied a similar level of detail to company and battalion level training giving simple, but clarifying details to allow generally less well trained Americans to begin to master their craft.⁷

In addition to simple, but comprehensive instructions on drill and marching, the *Regulations* provided descriptions on common tactics—charging with bayonets, passing obstacles, negotiating a defile, firing from the platoon to the battalion level, how to integrate artillery into an infantry brigade, and retreating. Steuben also gave simple instructions for how to counter cavalry.⁸ Following these tactical instructions, the third section in *Regulations* described how to march an army, management of the Army's baggage, establish camp and ensure their "order and cleanliness." The book covered inspections, guard duty, care for the sick and the inspection and management of ammunition.⁹ Finally, Steuben's *Regulations* provide duty descriptions for all positions in an Army from the commander of a regiment to private soldiers.¹⁰

⁶ United States of America, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of United States. Part I.* [By Baron Friedrich Wilhelm August Steuben] (Philadelphia: Charles Cist, 1782), 18.

⁷ America, 20.

⁸ United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.*, 1781, 27–41.

⁹ America, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of United States. Part I.* [By Baron Friedrich Wilhelm August Steuben], 35–44.

¹⁰ America, 65–76.

Regulations was a full throated adaptation of the best European military thinking distilled for American use. It should be seen as a continuation of Steuben's training of the Continental Army, which began at Valley Forge in March 1778 with his training of a model company to instruct the rest of the Army. It was no doubt informed by his service with the Army during the summer of 1778. Most notably, Steuben rallied disorganized Continental forces at the battle of Monmouth and then led a counterattack as British forces withdrew from the field.¹¹ Steuben brought his Seven Years' War experience in the Prussian Army, the understanding of the state and training of the Continental Army that he had gained at Valley Forge, and what he had learned on campaign together to write a manual well adapted to what the Continental Army needed and could execute. The fact that Washington tasked a Prussian officer to serve as both the Continental Army's Inspector General and the lead writer for the Army's first regulations is clear evidence of Washington's commitment to fighting a European style war at the head of the best, most conventionally trained army he could field. Following Frederick the Great's successes in the middle of the century, the Prussian Army was widely regarded as the greatest in the world and a frequent source in imitation.¹²

Regulations was first printed in 1779.¹³ An abstract titled *For the Use of the Pennsylvania Militia* appeared the same year.¹⁴ In all eight versions of the work appeared

¹¹ Lockhart, *The Drillmaster of Valley Forge*, 161–64.

¹² Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 102; Steven T Ross, *From Flintlock to Rifle : Infantry Tactics, 1740-1866* (London ;, Portland, Or. : F. Cass, 1996), 34.

¹³ *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*. (Philadelphia: Styner and Cist, 1779).

¹⁴ Pennsylvania, *For the Use of the Militia of Pennsylvania*.

between 1779 and 1783.¹⁵ The book remained popular well after the end of the war.¹⁶ Similar to the middle years of the Revolution, Steuben's *Regulations* was less widely published than the drill manuals printed at the onset of hostilities. *Regulations* was only printed Philadelphia, Massachusetts and Connecticut. From 1779 on, the Continental Army trained to reach the standard that Steuben's *Regulations* established. At the same time, most versions of the book appeared in late 1781 or later, after the Franco-American victory at Yorktown.¹⁷ Like the books published following the initial wave of military enthusiasm in 1775, *Regulations* more limited geographic range shows the narrowing of military interest and its general concentration around the Continental Army. While Americans remained reluctant to embrace a standing army, that army was and remained

¹⁵ United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.*, 1781; United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.*, 17774 (Hartford: Hudson, Barzillai, 1741-1823, printer., 1782), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F3018DFE144C110&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. By Baron Stuben, Major-General in the Army of the United States of America.*, 44278 (Boston: Fleet, Thomas, 1732-1797, printer., 1782), http://docs.newsbank.com/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info:sid/iw.newsbank.com:EAIX&rft_val_format=info:ofi/fmt:kev:mtx:ctx&rft_dat=0F2F82A78DF837B8&svc_dat=Evans:eaidoc&req_dat=0FDD1F2864DFC0F9; United States of America, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.* (Hartford, CN: Nathaniel Patten, 1783); United States, *Rules and Articles for the Better Government of the Troops Raised, or to Be Kept in Pay, by and at the Expence of the United States of America* (Philadelphia: David C. Claypoole, 1781); United States.

¹⁶ United States of America, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.* (Boston: T. & J. Fleet, 1784); America; United States of America, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.* (Philadelphia: Charles Cist, 1785); United States of America, *Baron Steuben's Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States, Which Have Not Only Been Adopted by Congress, but the Several Legislatures throughout the Continent for the Discipline of the Militia: Besides the Manual Exercise and Evolutions, Instructions for the Commandant of a Regiment down to a Private Soldier. Embellished with Eight Copper Plates.* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1787); United States of America, *Baron Steuben's Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States, Which Have Not Only Been Adopted by Congress, but the Several Legislatures throughout the Continent for the Discipline of the Militia: Besides the Manual Exercise and Evolutions, Intructions for Th Commandant of a Regiment down to the Private Soldier.* (Philadelphia: E. Oswald, 1786); United States of America, *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. By Baron de Steuben* (Worcester, MA: Isaiah Thomas, 1788).

¹⁷ United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.*, 1781, 2.

the locus of the Revolution's military effort. And as the war continued that military effort became both more regularized and in greater tension with the wider nation that it supported.

At the same time, state militias adopted Steuben's *Regulations*. An abstracted version was recommended to the officers of the Pennsylvania militia in 1779.¹⁸ In September 1781, the Massachusetts militia was ordered to "conform to the exercise" and in May 1782 Connecticut adopted the *Regulations* for use by the state militia.¹⁹ The 1779 Pennsylvania version condensed Steuben's 150 page work to just 38 focusing marching, the manual exercise, a limited discussion of company and battalion tactics and guard duty.²⁰ The foreword to the work notes that while Steuben's full book is "simple and easy; but this Abstract renders it more so, as every motion and evolution, not absolutely necessary for actual service is retrenched."²¹ This method of adaptation of *Regulations* is similar to earlier adaptations of British manuals that sought to strip books to the minimum essential skills. It is also an example of how American adaptation succeeded in bridging the Continental-Militia tension. Steuben's full manual answered Washington's requirement for the Continental Army directly. In contrast, Pennsylvania militia leaders believed that a severely abridged version was all that their forces needed.

In 1778 following American victory at Saratoga, France finally officially allied with the United States.²² The alliance radically altered the course and nature of the

¹⁸ Pennsylvania, *For the Use of the Militia of Pennsylvania*, 3.

¹⁹ United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.*, 1781, 2; United States. Continental Army., *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States. Part I.*, 1782, 2.

²⁰ Pennsylvania, *For the Use of the Militia of Pennsylvania*.

²¹ Pennsylvania, 3.

²² Mackesy, *The War for America, 1775-1783*, 160.

American Revolution. While France had secretly assisted the Americans previously, their open alliance transformed the conflict from a de facto civil war into a worldwide conflict. Britain could no longer focus solely on events in the thirteen colonies, but now had to consider potential threats to the British home islands, British possessions in the Caribbean, Canada, and even India.²³ Ultimately, the expansion of the war forced Britain to redistribute its limited forces with the British Army in North America losing forces to other theaters. For the Americans, the French entry made achieving victory via decisive battle more attainable. France could provide a Navy, artillery, and the best military engineers in the world. *Regulations*, if the Continental Army and other American forces could adhere to its dictates, promised a force able to fight effectively alongside the French.

Generally stymied in the New England and the Mid-Atlantic States, in 1779, the British shifted the focus of their operations south in search of Loyalists to rally to the cause. While initially successful, the British southern campaign failed to achieve the decisive results British leaders anticipated. Despite early dramatic failures, American battlefield performance improved over the course of the southern campaign. Daniel Morgan with a mix of militia and Continental regulars destroyed Banastre Tarleton's Legion at the battle of Cowpens.²⁴ Nathanael Greene surrendered the field to Lord Charles Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse, but gained the strategic initiative and then retook almost all of the Carolinas.²⁵ Most importantly, a combined Franco-American

²³ Mackesy, 262.

²⁴ John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse; The American Revolution in the Carolinas* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 326.

²⁵ Buchanan, 380–81; Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789*, 369–74.

force cornered Cornwallis' force at Yorktown and aided by a rare French naval victory compelled his surrender, effectively ending the war.

Conventional tactical proficiency allowed the United States to win the Revolution on terms American leaders found acceptable. By the latter half of the Revolution, the Continental Army's tactical performance had improved significantly. While Washington's army never reached the proficiency of his British opponents, Monmouth, Cowpens, Guilford Courthouse, and Yorktown proved that the Continental Line could hold its own against British Regulars. Intent on building a regular army that mirrored European standards, Washington succeeded.²⁶ Adapting European military thinking in ways that suited American forces allowed the United States to align its tactics to its strategy and, most importantly, to the nation's political aim. Americans initially fought to defend what they believed were their God given rights as British subjects.²⁷ As the Revolution progressed that claim expanded to one of "self-evident truths" less strictly tied to a British heritage.²⁸ Implicitly both claims made functional, military demands on Americans. If Americans claimed a status equal to or even superior to their European foes, they could not then fight in less civilized ways. Fighting with modern tactics and organization was another way to demonstrate the right to equality and freedom.

Continental Army leaders could configure their forces to fight in conventional, European ways because they wanted to. While on its surface this is a simplistic explanation, Americans were eager to adapt and adopt European military books because

²⁶ Brumwell, *George Washington*, 408–9.

²⁷ Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*.

²⁸ Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (Vintage, 1993), 189–212.

they viewed that as the correct way to fight. American military leaders, Washington foremost amongst them, want to imitate and emulate the British Army and the European military tradition it represented. Their cultural military heritage was European and they intended to embrace it as fully as possible. This cultural affinity was central to allowing a team of mostly foreign officers to write the Continental Army's first full tactical manual.

That army had succeeded because it had, in the main, adapted to the strict discipline needed to execute eighteenth century tactics. It also succeeded because a regular Continental core could serve as a foundation on which local militia could coalesce.²⁹ The United States won its independence by creating an effective standing army that could hold its own on the battlefield against a trained European foe. It also won because poorly trained, loosely organized American militia rallied to support Continental forces and denied the British the ability to fully consolidate any tactical gains they made. While the *Regulations for Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* represented a triumph of the idea of regulars, drill, and discipline over an American ideological and social preference for enthusiastic militia, that momentary victory was neither absolute nor enduring.³⁰ In practice American victory demanded the melding of Continental regulars and local militias. The military books of the late Revolution elide that compromise as Steuben wrote to build a professional army. At the same time, as the 1779 Pennsylvania version of Steuben's work demonstrates, militia leaders sought to emulate Continental Army regulations, but also simplified them for militia use.³¹

²⁹ Mackesy, *The War for America, 1775-1783*, 407.

³⁰ Royster, *A Revolutionary People At War*, 331–68.

³¹ Pennsylvania, *For the Use of the Militia of Pennsylvania*.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

To win the Revolution Americans had to build a virtually new military establishment. Developing military doctrine and thinking suited to the task was central to that endeavor. Nonetheless, as the historical record shows, that process was neither smooth, clearly planned, nor centrally directed. Americans did have a canon of European military writing to rely on. At the same time, much of that writing was ill-suited to American needs. Americans had to either adapt European books for their use or write their own. In the end Americans did both, with the American books written to adapt European military thinking and methods for American circumstances and readers.

Military books in Revolutionary America appeared in three generally distinct waves. During the lead up to the war and the first years of conflict until roughly 1775, Americans wanted simple, basic books—mostly drill manuals that allowed their readers to learn only the essential skills needed to fire a musket. Like many other revolutionaries Americans were convinced that righteousness and revolutionary fervor would vanquish skill, experience and training. While the events of 1775 supported that belief, 1776 did not. As the war intensified, the American need for a broader range of military knowledge grew. At the same time, demand contracted from a general population inflamed with military fever to a committed core mostly centered on the Continental Army. During this middle period, Americans wrote their own books and reprinted European books on a wide range of military topics from artillery to the art of war, military engineering to horsemanship. In contrast to the years immediately before, these books were overwhelmingly printed in Philadelphia. Finally as the war moved towards its final stages, a team of mostly European officers led by the Baron von Steuben wrote the first

Continental Army regulations. They were intent on both capturing their experience and knowledge and adapting it for use by American soldiers of all ranks. All three waves were attempts to adapt European military thinking for American use. In the end this adaptation was successful.

Despite the substantial differences between the eighteenth century and today, it is worth considering how Revolutionary Americans were able to successfully adapt European military books for their own, use that knowledge as part of an effort to build credible military forces, and finally win a decisive victory over the British Empire. The Americans succeeded because the ways that they adapted aligned their tactics—the broad focus of the military books printed during the Revolution—with American strategy and political aims. Fighting using conventional European tactics made final political victory more likely. It increased the chances of an alliance with a major European power. It also likely constrained British forces to fight more conventionally. Conventional, European tactics also aligned with American strategy. Continental Army leaders, Washington foremost among them, sought to win the Revolution via decisive battle. Adapted American military books helped make that a reality. Adapting European books was also culturally comfortable. The pre-Revolution American militia was based on a British model. Many senior Continental Army officers had previous experience with the British Army. The fact that so many European officers served in the Continental Army is another sign of American cultural affinity and comfort with training to fight in conventional, European ways.

Finally, the adaptations Americans made succeeded in negotiating the standing army versus militia tension that persisted throughout the Revolution. By producing

simple books intended for basic training and larger audience, American adaptations met militia needs. At the same time, more complex works that both trained the Continental Army to a higher standard and educated officers on a wider range of military topics made that Army a more effective and credible force. That allow the Continental Army to be both more effective in battle and a better foundation around which militia forces could coalesce.

Adapting European military books for the American Revolution provides clear lessons for military adaptation today. Tactical adaption must align with strategy and the desired political ends. Adaptation is most effective when it reinforces an organization's dominant culture and does not subvert it. Adaptations succeed best when they negotiate tensions within or between critical organizations. Moreover, as this brief history of Revolutionary doctrine demonstrates, adaptation and progress also occurs in fits and starts and has its greatest chance of success when it endeavors to solve discreet problems. In every sense, Revolutionary doctrinal development was evolutionary and built on the earlier works of others, taking the best, modifying it to existing physical and intellectual circumstances, and eschewing the rest. Revolutionary-era doctrine proved successful precisely because it fine-tuned the art of the possible and did not attempt to create a doctrine or an Army that while made up of patriots and foreigners was not foreign to its nature.

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